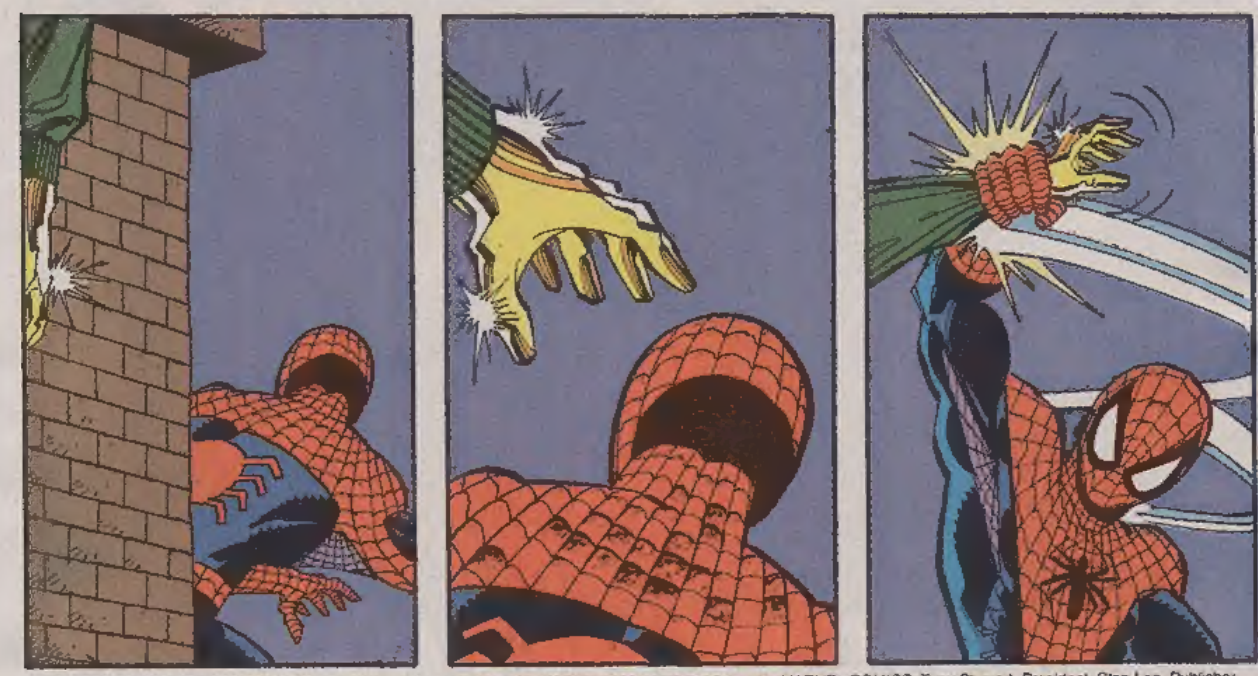
MARVEL COMICS
© 1991 MARVEL ENT GROUP INC
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN
184
JAN
UK 65p
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE CHILD WITHIN: AFTERMATH!
the SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN
A MAN GONE MAD!
30TH ANNIVERSARY
THE FANTASTIC FOUR
1961-1991

BITTEN BY A RADIOACTIVE SPIDER, STUDENT PETER PARKER GAINED THE PROPORTIONATE STRENGTH AND AGILITY OF AN ARACHNID! ARMED WITH HIS WONDROUS WEB-SHOOTERS, THE RELUCTANT SUPER HERO STRUGGLES WITH SINISTER SUPER-VILLAINS, MAKING ENDS MEET, AND MAINTAINING SOME SEMBLANCE OF A NORMAL LIFE!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN!™



THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN™ Vol. 1, No. 184, January, 1992. (ISSN# 0898-1833) Published by MARVEL COMICS, Terry Stewart, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. Published monthly. Copyright © 1991 by Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.00 per copy in the U.S. and $1.25 in Canada. Subscription rate for 12 issues: $12.00 U.S.; Canadian subscribers must add $8.00 for postage and GST; and $24.00 foreign. GST #R127032852 No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, c/o MARVEL COMICS, 9TH FLOOR, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Printed in the U.S.A.

THE CHILD WITHIN: AFTERMATH

J.M. DeMatteis — WRITER
Sal Buscema — ARTIST
Rick Parker — LETTERER
Bob Sharen — COLORIST
Danny Fingeroth — EDITOR
Tom DeFalco — EDITOR IN CHIEF

GEEZ--YOU ALMOST TOOK MY ARM OFF--AND THAT'S NOT EASY T'DO TO A GUY LIKE ME.
SORRY.
AND DON'T CALL ME MOLTEN MAN. I PUT ALL THAT STUFF BEHIND ME. REALLY BUGS ME WHEN PEOPLE CALL ME THAT.
SORRY.
WHAT'S WITH YOU, ANYWAY?
I MEAN, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD, YOU ASK ME TO MEET YOU HERE AND THEN YOU PRACTICALLY TEAR MY ARM OUT AND--

OKAY! OKAY! I'M SORRY! OKAY?!
YOU DONE YELLING NOW?
YEAH. I THINK SO. I REALLY AM SORRY, RAXTON. I'M JUST JUMPY. AND WORRIED SICK.
WORRIED--ABOUT WHAT?

ABOUT YOUR BROTHER-IN-LAW. ABOUT HARRY.
HARRY? SIS GOT A CALL FROM HIS OFFICE THE OTHER DAY--SAYING HE WENT OFF ON SOME LAST MINUTE BUSINESS TRIP.
I'M AFRAID NOT.
HARRY...BECAME THE GREEN GOBLIN AGAIN. TRIED TO KILL ME...WE FOUGHT...

...AND, AFTER THAT, I... WELL...LET'S JUST SAY HE GOT AWAY. *
SOMEONE'S GOT TO TELL LIZ. HIS WIFE HAS TO KNOW, AND I THOUGHT THAT YOU--
*ISSUES# 178 - 183 DANNY

IT'S
JUST
NOT

FAIR!!
KA AK!

OSBORN'S THE MOST DECENT MAN I'VE EVER KNOWN! HE GAVE ME A JOB,.. HE GAVE ME A SECOND CHANCE... WHEN NOBODY ELSE WOULD!
RR
AAKK!

HOW CAN THERE BE ANY JUSTICE IN THE WORLD WHEN A GUY LIKE THAT HAS TO SUFFER SO MUCH?!
KRAKK!

WHEN PEOPLE AS GOOD AS HARRY AND LIZ CAN HAVE THEIR LIVES TORN T' PIECES SO EASILY?
YOU TELL ME THAT, SPIDER-MAN--

--WHERE'S THE JUSTICE?!
RAXTON,.. MARK... CALM DOWN!

THIS ISN'T DOING ANYBODY ANY GOOD!
WHAT AM I GONNA TELL LIZ?! WHAT AM I GONNA TELL LIZ?!
YES.., LIZ! REMEMBER LIZ.? YOU CAN'T FLY OFF THE HANDLE NOW! SHE NEEDS YOU! SHE NEEDS SOMEBODY STRONG TO HELP HER THROUGH THIS!

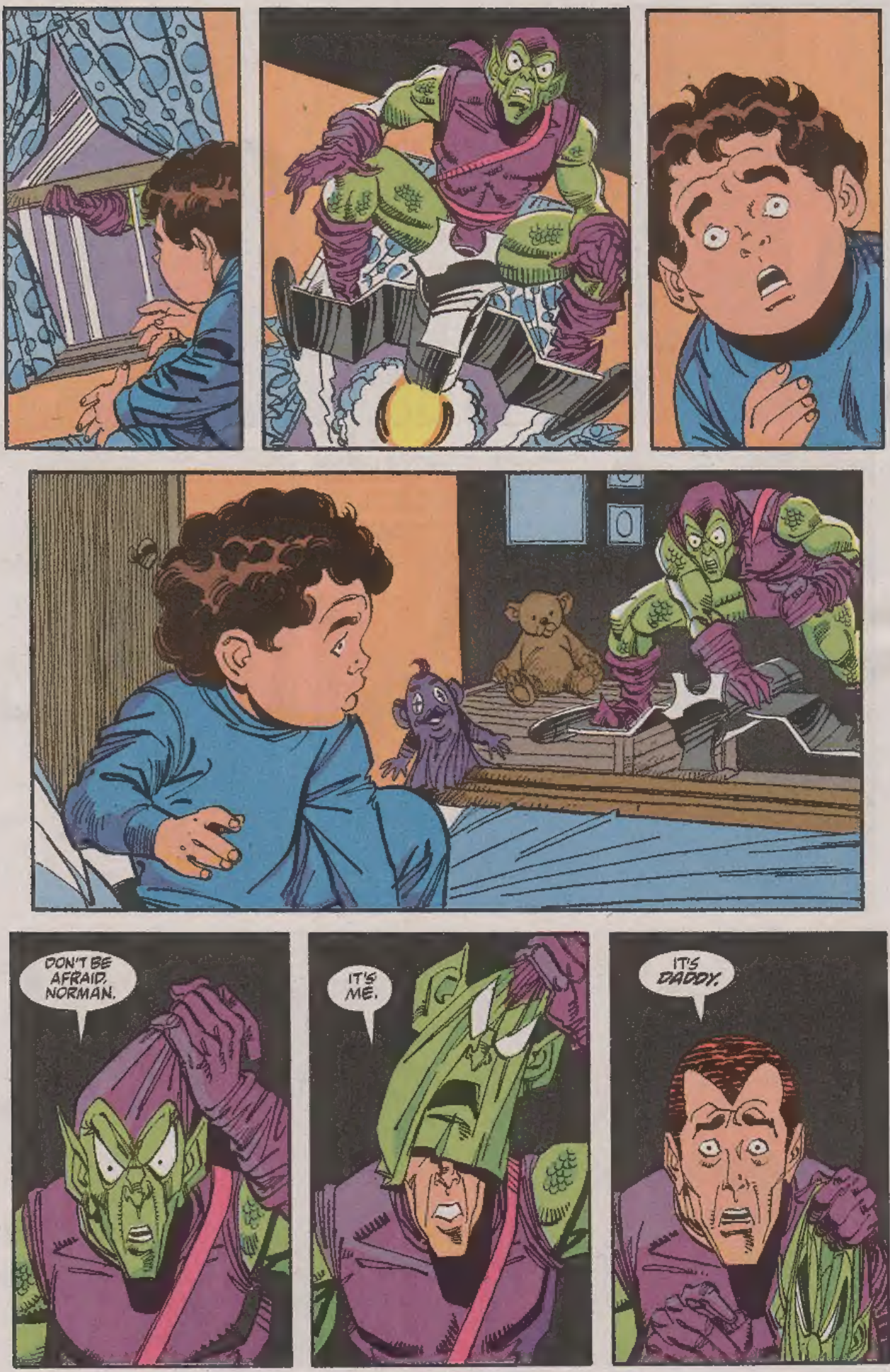
IT'S JUST NOT FAIR.
NO, IT'S NOT. BUT... IF WE CAN FIND HARRY... GET HIM SOME HELP--

WHY? WHY'D YOU LET HIM GET AWAY? YOU ALWAYS STOP THE BAD GUYS, RIGHT? YOU ALWAYS STOPPED ME.
THIS--THIS IS A LITTLE DIFFERENT.
I HAVEN'T SLEPT IN DAYS. I'VE BEEN SCOURING THE CITY FOR HIM, AND I'M NOT GOING TO REST UNTIL I--

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?
I DUNNO. FOR A MOMENT THERE, IT FELT LIKE--
LIKE WHAT?

DOESN'T MATTER. THERE'S NOTHING THERE.
" I MUST BE JUMPIER THAN I THOUGHT."
POST NO BILLS

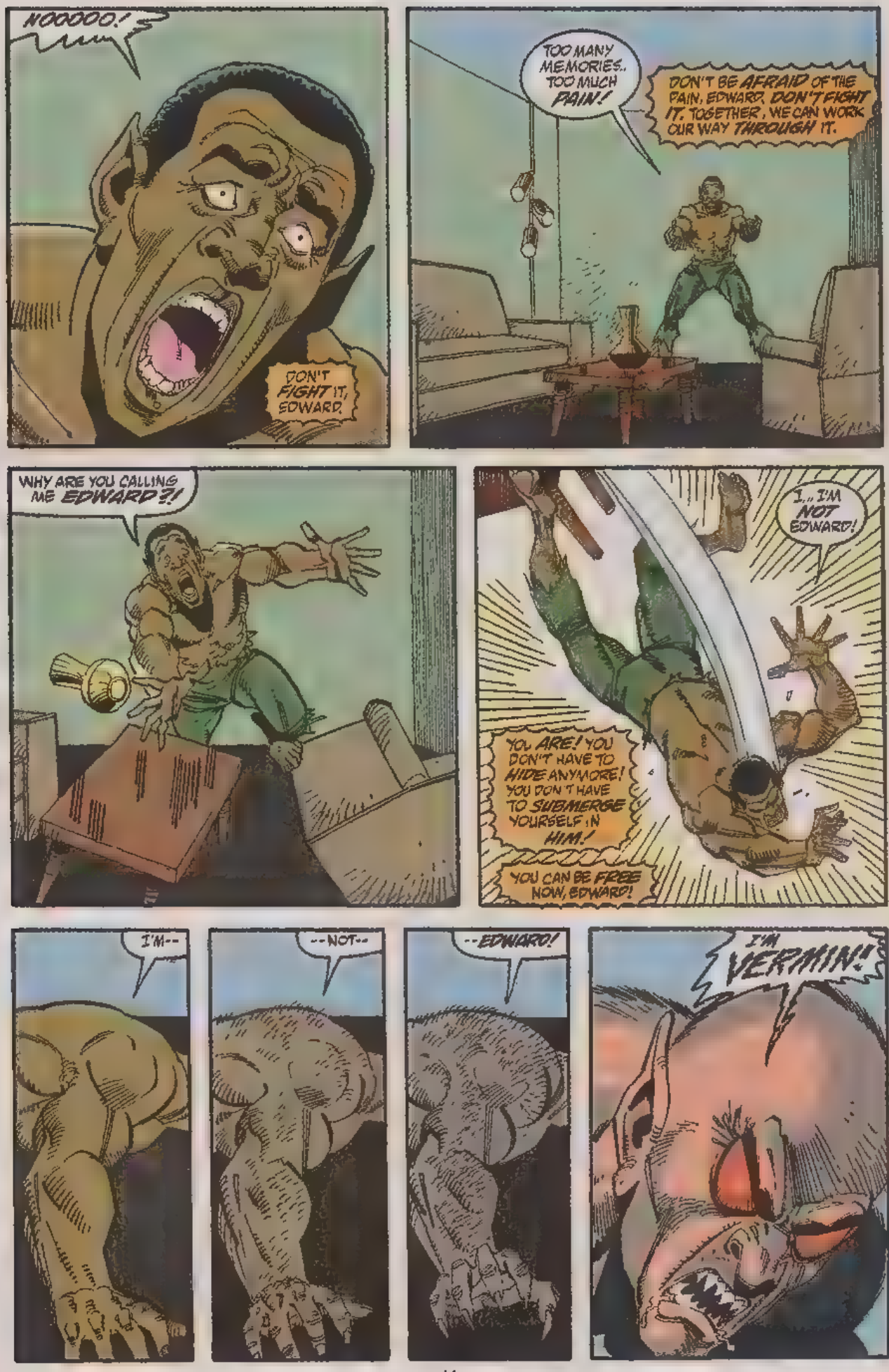
SHOULD'VE KILLED 'IM THEN AND THERE. SQUASHED THE LITTLE SPIDER.
NO...NO... I CAN'T HURT PETER. PETER'S MY BEST FRIEND. PETER'S MY--
ENEMY! THAT'S WHAT HE IS. KILLER. LIAR. MONSTER.
NO. MY FATHER WAS THE MONSTER! MY FATHER WAS--
--A GOOD MAN. KIND AND LOVING AND GENTLE. AND--
THE GREEN GOBLIN. HE WAS THE GREEN GOBLIN.
BUT NOW I'M THE GOBLIN. AND I DON'T WANT TO BE. BUT IT HURTS TOO MUCH TO BE HARRY, SO--
I'M SO CONFUSED!
THAT'S WHY I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY: FROM PETER. FROM MY FATHER. FROM ALL OF IT. I NEED TO GET AWAY AND THINK AND FIGURE OUT WHO I AM!
GOOD OR EVIL. HERO OR KILLER.
BUT BEFORE I DO--

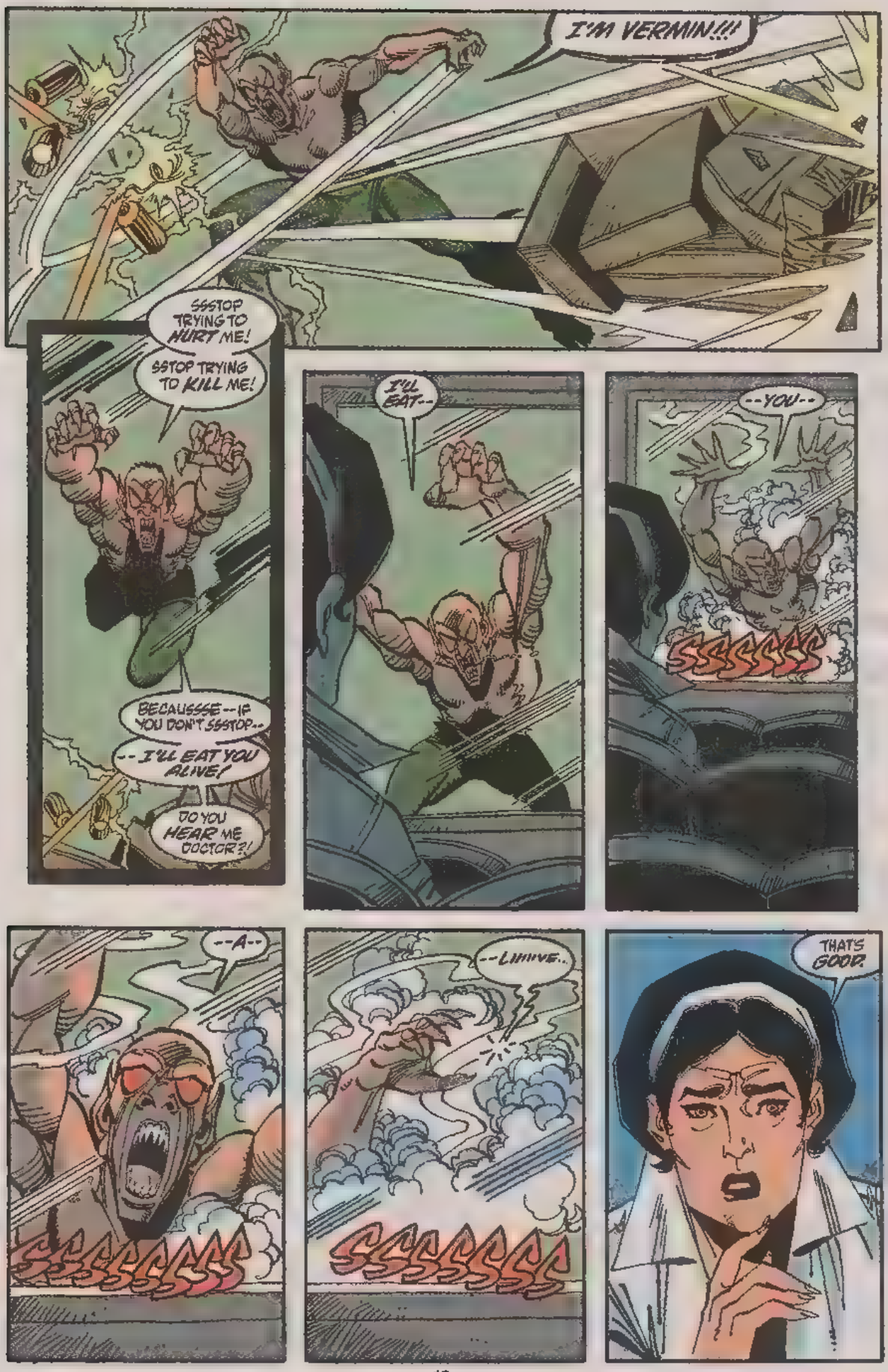

DON'T BE AFRAID, NORMAN.
IT'S ME.
IT'S DADDY.

DADDY! DADDY... YOU SCARED ME!
I DIDN'T MEAN TO SCARE YOU, BUDDY. I'M SORRY. I JUST... I JUST WANTED TO SEE YOU ONE MORE TIME --
WHY ARE YOU WEARING THOSE FUNNY CLOTHES?
-- BEFORE I GO AWAY.
WHERE'RE YOU GOING, DADDY?
I'M NOT SURE YET. BUT IT WON'T BE FOR LONG. IT'S JUST THAT... THERE ARE SOME THINGS... VERY IMPORTANT THINGS... THAT DADDY NEEDS TO WORK OUT.
CAN I HELP YOU WORK 'EM OUT?
NO, BUDDY--
-- I DON'T THINK YOU CAN.
NOW YOU GO TO SLEEP, NORMAN.
BUT I DON'T WANNA GO T'SLEEP. I WANNA GO WITH YOU.
YOU CAN'T, BUDDY.
WHY NOT?
YOU JUST CAN'T. BUT I PROMISE I'LL BE BACK.
AND YOU HAVE TO MAKE ME A PROMISE.
WHAT?
PROMISE ME YOU'LL NEVER FORGET--

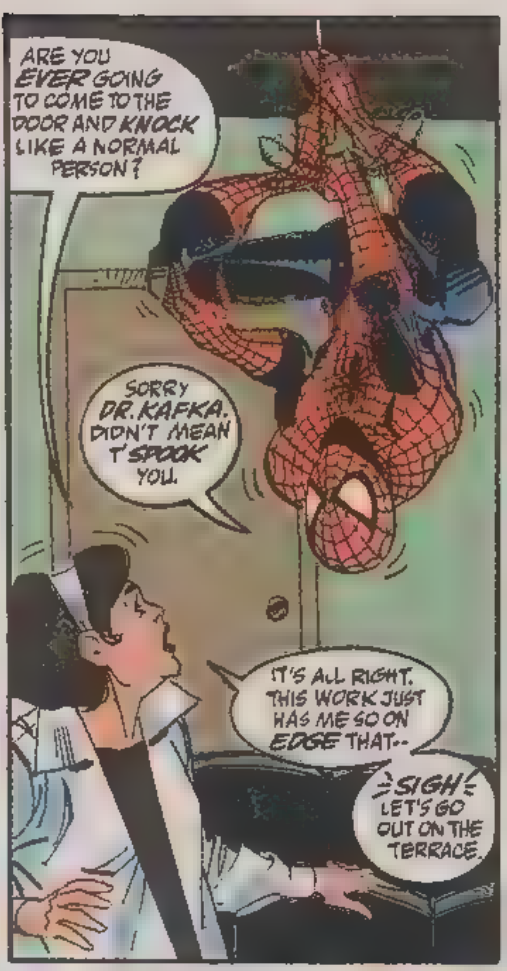
--HOW MUCH DADDY LOVES YOU.
I PROMISE.
KLIK
NORMAN? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? I THOUGHT I--
--HEARD--
LIZ! NO!
I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO SEE ME LIKE THIS!
NOT LIKE THIS!!
HARRY!

OH, LIZ-- I LOVE YOU SO MUCH! YOU AND NORMAN MEAN EVERYTHING TO ME!
BUT YOU'D NEVER UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M GOING THROUGH...THE PAIN I'M IN!
AND I DON'T KNOW IF I WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND! BECAUSE THEN YOU'D KNOW THE REAL ME... YOU'D KNOW HOW WEAK, HOW WORTHLESS I AM!
THAT'S WHY I HAVE TO WEAR THIS COSTUME... HIDE BEHIND THIS MASK. HARRY'S BEEN HURT TOO MUCH...HE'S TOO AFRAID TOO SPINELESS!
SHOE REPAIR
BUT THE GOBLIN--
WHOOOM!
WHOOOM!
-- THE GOBLIN HAS POWER!
BUT I'M NOT THE GOBLIN!
BUT I AM
SO CONFUSED!
HARRY!
GOBLIN!
GOT TO GET AWAY.. GOT TO UNDERSTAND WHO I REALLY AM!
BUT I KNOW THAT ONE DAY I'LL COME BACK... I HAVE TO COME BACK FOR MY FAMILY--
-- AND FOR SPIDER-MAN.


NOOOOO!
DON'T FIGHT IT, EDWARD.
TOO MANY MEMORIES.. TOO MUCH PAIN!
DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE PAIN, EDWARD. DON'T FIGHT IT. TOGETHER, WE CAN WORK OUR WAY THROUGH IT.
WHY ARE YOU CALLING ME EDWARD?!
I... I'M NOT EDWARD!
YOU ARE! YOU DON'T HAVE TO HIDE ANYMORE! YOU DON'T HAVE TO SUBMERGE YOURSELF IN HIM!
YOU CAN BE FREE NOW, EDWARD!
I'M--
--NOT--
--EDWARD!
I'M VERMIN!

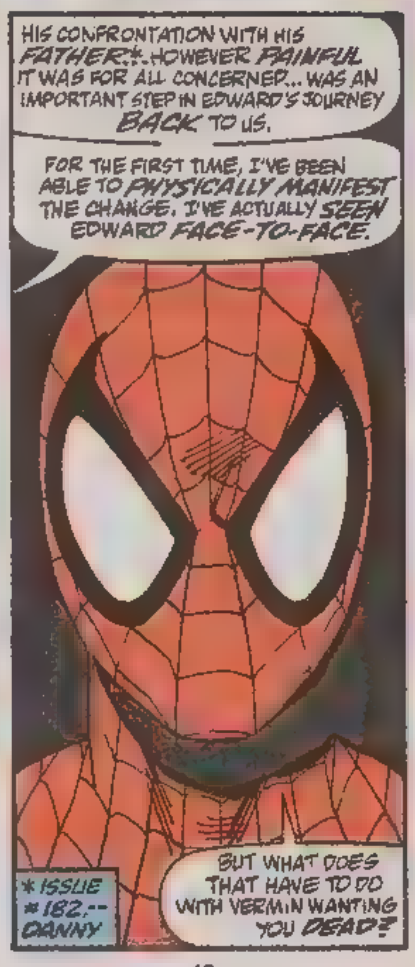

I'M VERMIN!!!!
SSSTOP TRYING TO HURT ME!
SSTOP TRYING TO KILL ME!
BECAUSSSE--IF YOU DON'T SSSTOP--
--I'LL EAT YOU ALIVE!
DO YOU HEAR ME DOCTOR?!
I'LL EAT--
--YOU--
SSSSSS
--A--
SSSSSSS
--LIIIIVE..
SSSSSSS
THAT'S GOOD.

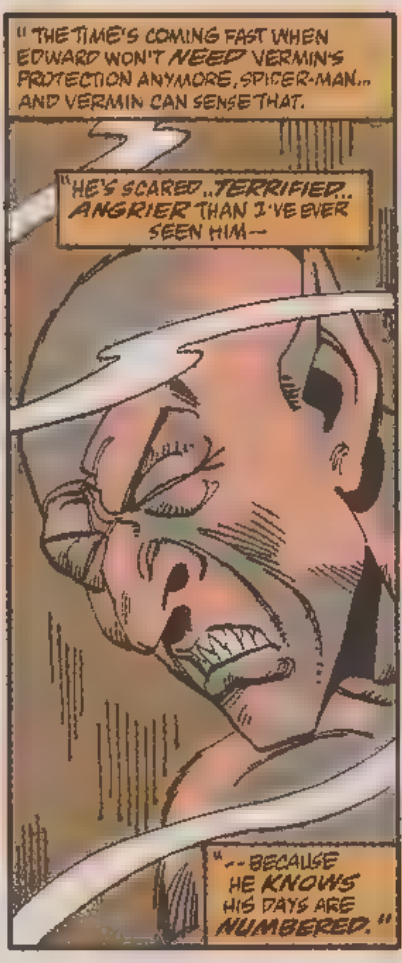
YOU'VE SURE GOT A FUNNY IDEA OF WHAT'S "GOOD" DOC.
HUH?
UP HERE.


ARE YOU EVER GOING TO COME TO THE DOOR AND KNOCK LIKE A NORMAL PERSON?
SORRY DR. KAFKA. DIDN'T MEAN T' SPOOK YOU.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. THIS WORK JUST HAS ME SO ON EDGE THAT--
SIGH LET'S GO OUT ON THE TERRACE.

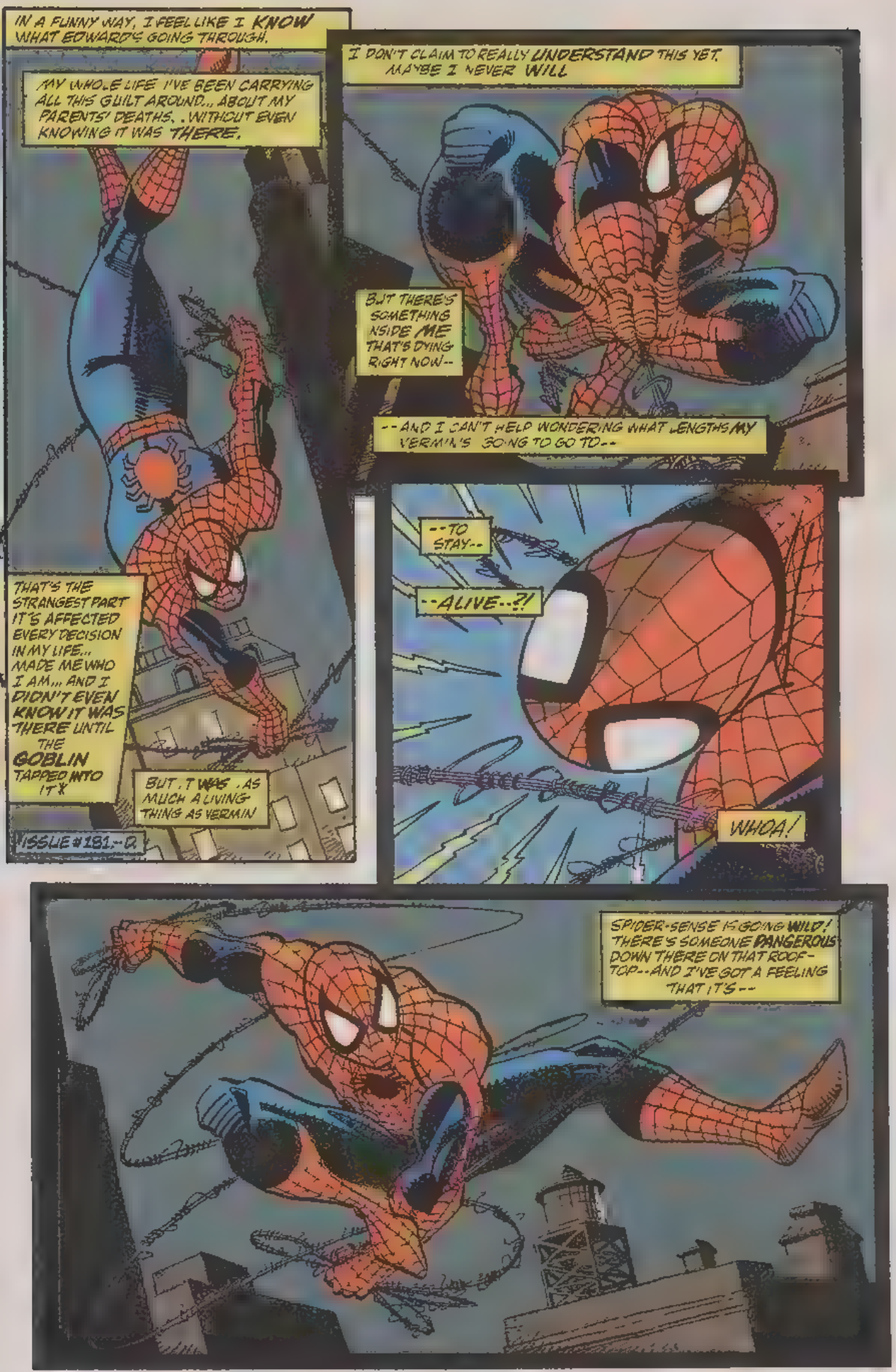
...SO, YOU WANNA EXPLAIN TO ME HOW VERMIN TELLING YOU HE'S GOING TO EAT YOU FOR LUNCH IS "GOOD"?
I'VE TOLD YOU BEFORE THAT VERMIN'S STATE S AS MUCH A PSY-CHOLOGICAL ONE AS A PHYSICAL ONE. .
RIGHT. YOU SAID THE VARIOUS CHEMICAL TREATMENTS TO UN-DO BARON ZEMO'S TRANSFOR-MATION OF EDWARD WOULDN'T WORK UNLESS YOU COULD REACH EDWARD'S MIND.

ALL THESE YEARS, A PART OF EDWARD.. THE DEEPEST PART...HAS BELIEVED HE DESERVES TO BE TRAPPED IN THAT HIDEOUS FORM, IN THAT HIDEOUS PERSONALITY--
IT'S BEEN A METHOD OF SURVIVAL FOR HIM... A WAY TO PROTECT HIMSELF FROM THE ABUSES OF HIS CHILDHOOD. IN A STRANGE WAY, VERMIN HAS BEEN EDWARD'S ..
GUARDIAN ANGEL.
BUT ALL OUR HYPNO-THERAPY WORK THESE PAST MONTHS HAS LOOSENED VERMIN'S GRIP. MADE EDWARD STRONGER.


HIS CONFRONTATION WITH HIS FATHER!..HOWEVER PAINFUL IT WAS FOR ALL CONCERNED... WAS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN EDWARD'S JOURNEY BACK TO US.
FOR THE FIRST TIME, I'VE BEEN ABLE TO PHYSICALLY MANIFEST THE CHANGE. I'VE ACTUALLY SEEN EDWARD FACE-TO-FACE.
* ISSUE #182.-- DANNY
BUT WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH VERMIN WANTING YOU DEAD?

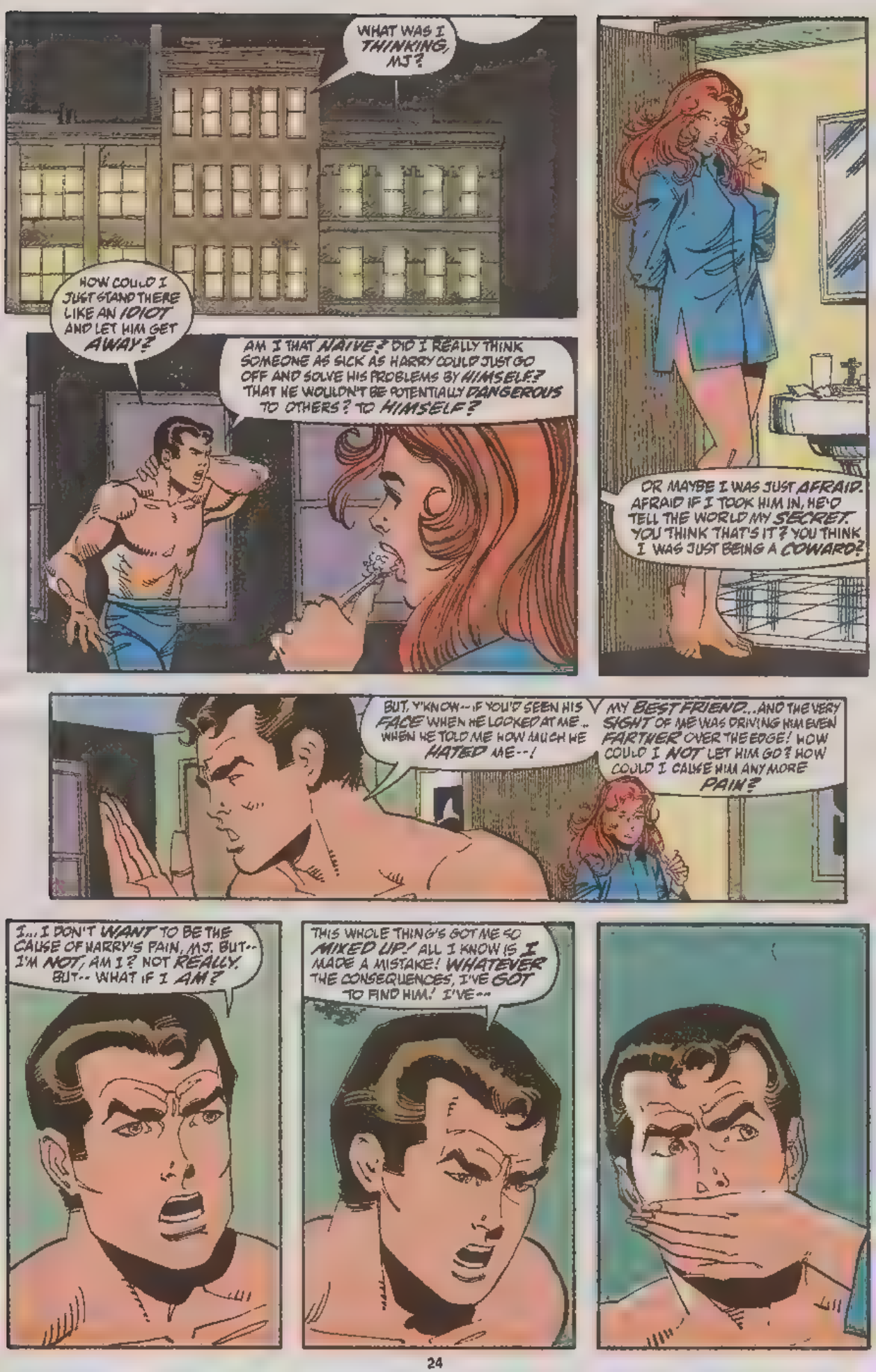

"THE TIME'S COMING FAST WHEN EDWARD WON'T NEED VERMIN'S PROTECTION ANYMORE, SPIDER-MAN... AND VERMIN CAN SENSE THAT.
"HE'S SCARED..TERRIFIED.. ANGRIER THAN I'VE EVER SEEN HIM--
"--BECAUSE HE KNOWS HIS DAYS ARE NUMBERED."

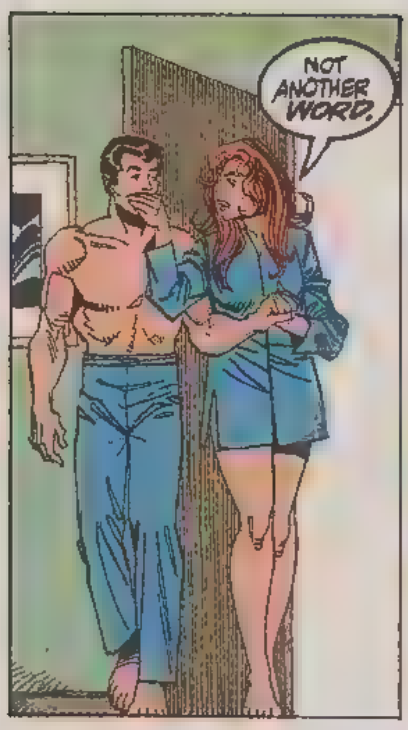
LET'S HOPE SO. EDWARD'S BEEN THROUGH ENOUGH. WE ALL HAVE.
THANKS FOR THE UPDATE, DOC. I'VE GOTTA GO.
THWIP
SOMETHING ELSE ON YOUR MIND?
THAT NIGHT... WHEN I CAME TO YOU HALF OUT OF MY MIND.. MY MASK... IT WAS--
THE LIGHTS WERE OUT. I WAS HALF ASLEEP AND I PUT YOUR MASK BACK ON YOU AS QUICKLY AS I COULD.
REALLY?
WE ALL WEAR MASKS, SPIDER-MAN. AND WE ALL HAVE REASONS FOR WEARING THEM.
I DIDN'T FEEL I HAD ANY RIGHT TO SEE WHAT WAS UNDER YOURS--UNLESS YOU WANTED ME TO.
THANKS.
BUT Y'KNOW, FROM THE LITTLE I COULD SEE--
"--YOU'VE GOT A GOOD FACE."

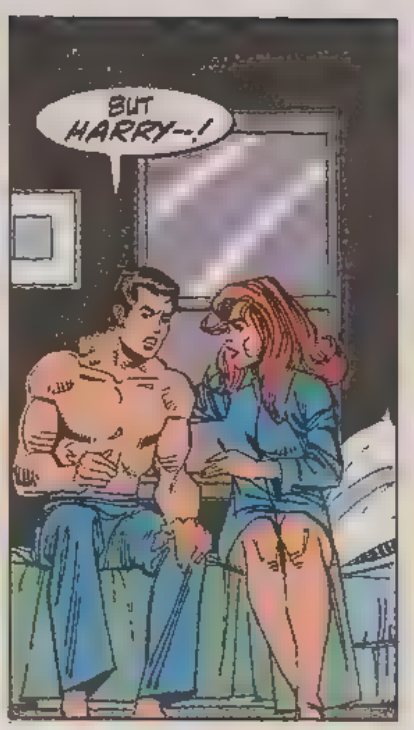

IN A FUNNY WAY, I FEEL LIKE I KNOW WHAT EDWARD'S GOING THROUGH.
MY WHOLE LIFE I'VE BEEN CARRYING ALL THIS GUILT AROUND... ABOUT MY PARENTS' DEATHS... WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING IT WAS THERE.
I DON'T CLAIM TO REALLY UNDERSTAND THIS YET. MAYBE I NEVER WILL
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING INSIDE ME THAT'S DYING RIGHT NOW--
--AND I CAN'T HELP WONDERING WHAT LENGTHS MY VERMIN'S GOING TO GO TO--
THAT'S THE STRANGEST PART IT'S AFFECTED EVERY DECISION IN MY LIFE... MADE ME WHO I AM... AND I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW IT WAS THERE UNTIL THE GOBLIN TAPPED INTO IT.
BUT, IT WAS, AS MUCH A LIVING THING AS VERMIN
--TO STAY--
--ALIVE--?!
WHOA!
SPIDER-SENSE IS GOING WILD! THERE'S SOMEONE DANGEROUS DOWN THERE ON THAT ROOF-TOP--AND I'VE GOT A FEELING THAT IT'S--
ISSUE #181--D.

HARRY..?

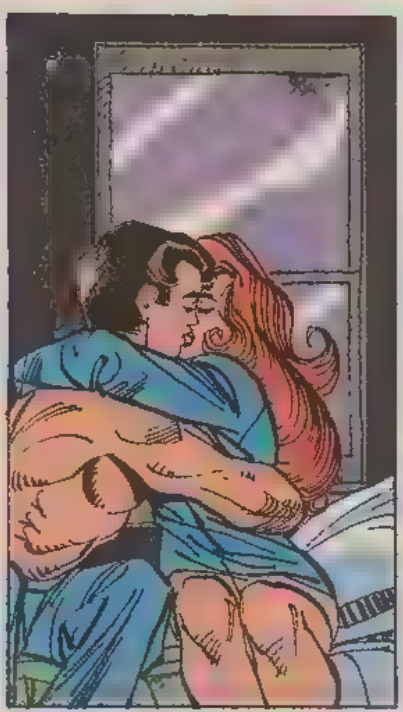
I LOVE YOU, SIS.
I KNOW.

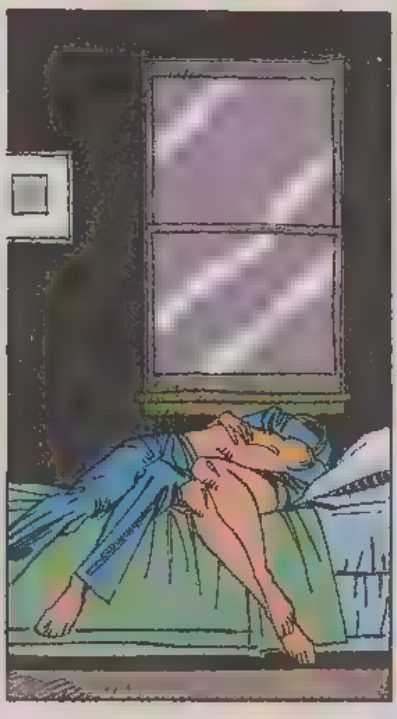

WHAT WAS I THINKING, MJ?
HOW COULD I JUST STAND THERE LIKE AN IDIOT AND LET HIM GET AWAY?
AM I THAT NAIVE? DID I REALLY THINK SOMEONE AS SICK AS HARRY COULD JUST GO OFF AND SOLVE HIS PROBLEMS BY HIMSELF? THAT HE WOULDN'T BE POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS TO OTHERS? TO HIMSELF?
OR MAYBE I WAS JUST AFRAID. AFRAID IF I TOOK HIM IN, HE'D TELL THE WORLD MY SECRET. YOU THINK THAT'S IT? YOU THINK I WAS JUST BEING A COWARD?
BUT, Y'KNOW-- IF YOU'D SEEN HIS FACE WHEN HE LOOKED AT ME.. WHEN HE TOLD ME HOW MUCH HE HATED ME--!
MY BEST FRIEND...AND THE VERY SIGHT OF ME WAS DRIVING HIM EVEN FARTHER OVER THE EDGE! HOW COULD I NOT LET HIM GO? HOW COULD I CAUSE HIM ANY MORE PAIN?
I... I DON'T WANT TO BE THE CAUSE OF HARRY'S PAIN, MJ. BUT-- I'M NOT, AM I? NOT REALLY. BUT-- WHAT IF I AM?
THIS WHOLE THING'S GOT ME SO MIXED UP! ALL I KNOW IS I MADE A MISTAKE! WHATEVER THE CONSEQUENCES, I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM! I'VE--


NOT ANOTHER WORD.


BUT HARRY--!

NOT
ANOTHER
WORD.





BULLPEN BULLETINS

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Hi, Heroes!

His name was Vincent Colletta, but everyone called him Vinnie. He started working for Marvel more than thirty years ago, before we were even known as Marvel. I believe we were called Atlas Publishing then. But the company name doesn't matter. What does matter is telling you what a great guy Vinnie was.

Hardly anyone except me knows this, because hardly anyone else was around at that time, but the first stories that Vinnie drew for us were romance strips. When I say "drew", I mean he did both the penciling and the inking, and he did them superbly. Now, I'm not talking ordinary, run-of-the-mill comic book romance strips. I'm talking about some of the most breathtakingly beautiful pen-and-ink illustrations you've ever seen! Vinnie treated each and every panel as if it were intended for The Louvre. I used to tell him he was putting too much work into each strip, that it wasn't necessary to make everything so lyrical, so pleasing to the eye, so incredibly perfect. After all, we were just printing 10-cent comic books. (10 cents! That'll give you an idea how long ago it was!)

But Vinnie couldn't help himself. He was a born perfectionist. If a drawing wasn't to his liking, he'd do it over and over again until he was satisfied. In the most literal sense of the word, Vincent Colletta was a truly dedicated artist.

Years later, after the romance fad had run its course, Vinnie offered to put his skill to use by inking our other strips, mainly super hero thrillers. For the next few decades, his speed, his dependability, his total professionalism, saved our deadlines and our schedules more times than I can ever tell.

The bullpen and I recently learned of Vinnie's passing. We'll always regret that we never had the chance to bid him goodbye. But I want to take this opportunity to offer our most heartfelt condolences to his wife and family. Vinnie Colletta was a uniquely talented, charismatic artist who was always there when we needed him and who never gave less than his best. He was a credit to our industry. He was my friend. I miss ya, VC. So do we all.

Excelsior!

Stan

Stan Lee

Try to remember, the kind of November . . oops, wrong month. Now we'll have to think up a new opening. Okay, so this is the month where we all chow down on turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and giblets (what the heck are giblets, anyway?), eating more food in one day than we do the whole rest of the year. Then we give thanks that we only have to eat cranberry sauce once a year, and Mom puts the whole thing in the freezer for a month so we can eat the same dinner again at Christmas.

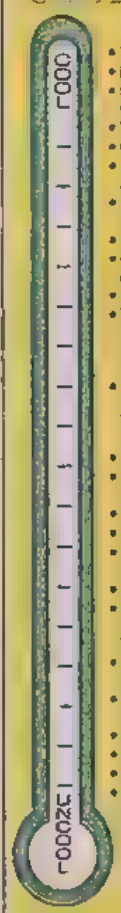
Here at Mighty Marvel, we have a lot to be thankful for this year. For starters, our head honcho (and head hipster) **Terry Stewart** initiated our first ever company picnic this past August. The picnic was a huge success, with plenty of food and drink for all, and fun and games galore (with fewer casualties than we would've expected). Among the activities were softball, football, and volleyball (Marvelolds will play any sport that ends in the word "ball"), with the highlight of the day being an impromptu wet t-shirt contest! Everyone is looking forward to next year's picnic, especially Ant-Man, who said he plans on bring lots of friends next time!

The Marvel softball team also had a lot to be thankful for this year. (Actually, there were TWO Marvel softball teams this year — so many people wanted to play that it was necessary to form two teams: the Punishers and the Hellraisers. But then the two teams merged about halfway through the season.) Both teams had largely unimpressive track records, but the season ended on a high note with a victory over arch-rival, the DC Bullets. DC had won the first two games against Marvel this year, so it was a particularly satisfying victory for our side as we crushed them in a devastating 8-0 shut out.

Team captains this year were neo-hipster **Paul Becton**, and hipster-wanna-be **Evan Skolnick**. Noted the easily-bruisable Evan, "This was the first game of the season in which I did not bleed." MVP's for the final DC game were **Fabian Nicieza** (who thinks it's square to be hip), ex-hipster **Craig Kunaschk** of the direct sales department, who pounded out a three-run homer, and assistant editor **John Lewandowski**, who was a hipster when being a hipster wasn't considered hip.

After the game, assistant editor (and interoontinental-hipster) **Richard Ashford** and his lovely wife **Carol Baird** (who's so hip she's got a different last name from her husband) threw a party at their digs in New York's Upper West Side. Players from the Marvel and DC teams showed up, and a good time was had by all. Truly it can be said that everyone came away a winner on that day (of course, the Marvel team were the real winners, and the DC team went crying home to their mothers! So there!).

NOVEMBER OMETER



- *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*
- BORIS YELTZEN
- SCORSESE/DeNIRO MOVIES
- THE FANTASTIC FOUR
- *COMEDY CENTRAL*
- PETER BAGGE'S *HATE*
- ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS
- MIKHAIL GORBACHEV
- *CAPITAIN AMERICA: LA PELICULA*
- IMAGE SEMINARS
- THE DISCONTINUATION OF FOAM PACKAGING BY McDONALDS
- SPIDER-MAN BALLOON IN MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE
- THE LETTER "L"
- TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION
- AMANDA PAYS
- AWARDS SHOWS
- SEMIPERMEABLE MEMBRANES
- NUTRASWEET
- ABC SITCOMS, ESPECIALLY "WHO'S THE BOSS"
- THE OCTOBER COOL-OMETER
- SELF-REFERENTIALISM
- NUISANCE SUITS
- MACAULEY CULKIN
- COMMUNISM
- THE NEW YORK SUBWAY SYSTEM

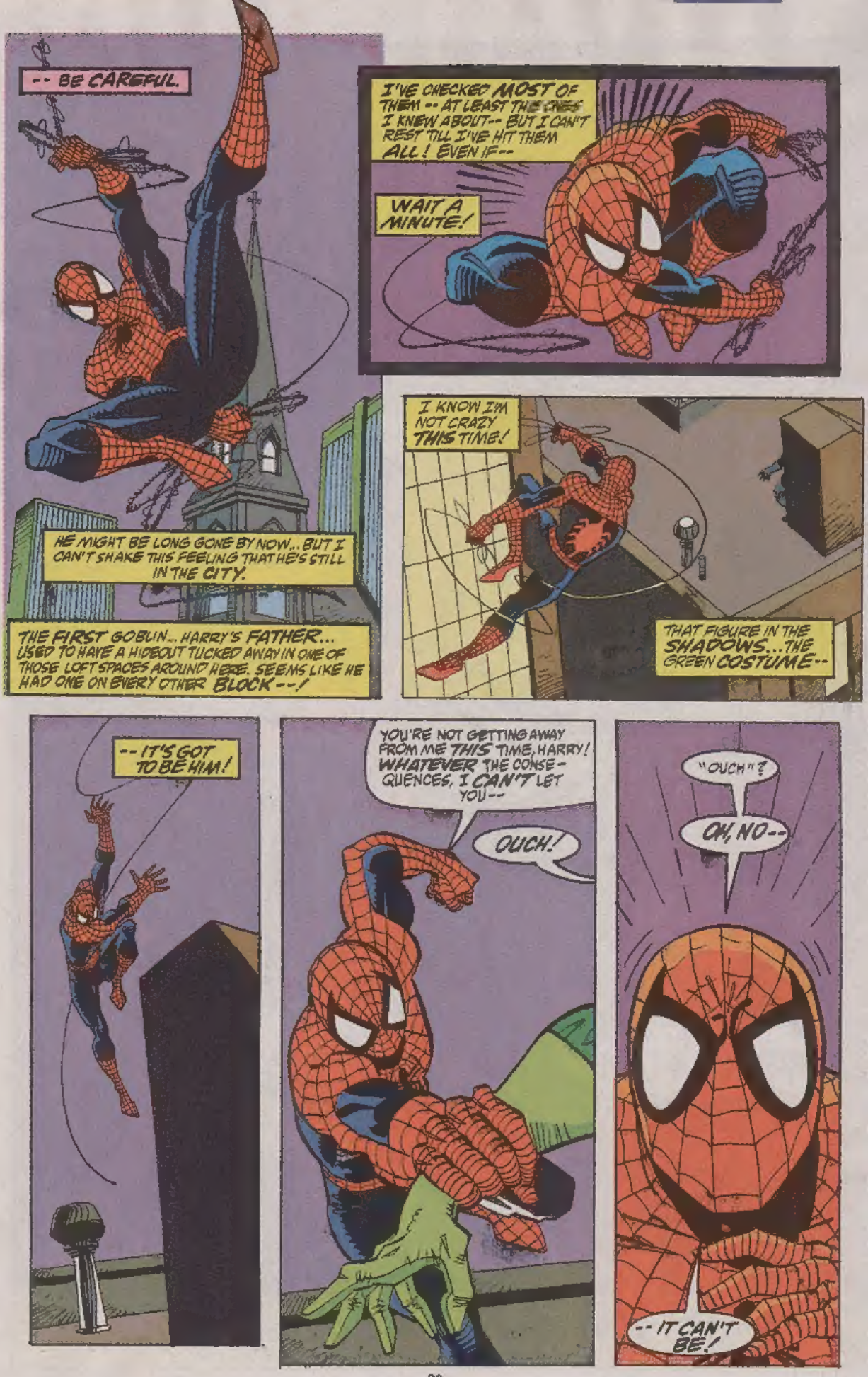
The kids of the St.Mary's recreational center in the South Bronx also have a lot to be thankful for this year — their building now sports a huge mural, filled with Marvel characters, painted by residents of the community. The mural was part of a project which takes kids off the streets and gives them a creative outlet. **Bob Budiansky**, who is a hipster from way back, helped the kids out on the project, ably assisted by demi-hipster (and everybody's sweetheart) **David Wohl**, whose return to staff was brutally ignored by this page several months back. Also assisting in this project was DEATHLOK artist and ultra-hipster **Denys Cowan**.

There are some thankful new fathers in the Marvel family these days — suspected hipster, GHOST RIDER writer **Howard Mackie** with his lovely wife **Deborah Highley**, just brought forth into this world a baby girl named **Alexandra**. Triple-threat SPIDER-MAN hipster **Todd McFarlane** and his fabulous wife **Wanda Kolomyjek** just joined forces to produce a baby girl named **Cyan**. And mega-hipster slash inker **Mark McKenna** and his vivacious wife **Kathy** produced their latest creative endeavor — a little bundle of joy named **Erin Marie**. All of these babies arrived on schedule, which means they have absolutely no future in this business!

One guy who is not too thankful this year is MARVEL AGE assistant editor **Mike Lackey**, who wouldn't know a hipster if one came up and bit him on the nose. Mike is famous for having the smallest desk at Marvel. Well, recently Mike moved downstairs to the ninth floor when MARVEL AGE received a new editor, cowgirl/hipster **Renée Witterstaetter**. With the move came an even smaller desk for Mike! At this rate,we may just take Mike's desk away, and he can put a board on his lap and use that! Look at the bright side, Mike — at least you're not sitting on milk crates!

Be here next month for more hyper-hip pronouncements and fooferah. You know what they say, "When the going gets hip, the hip get hopping!"

FIND HIM, PETER.
BUT, PLEASE--


-- BE CAREFUL.
I'VE CHECKED MOST OF THEM -- AT LEAST THE ONES I KNEW ABOUT -- BUT I CAN'T REST TILL I'VE HIT THEM ALL! EVEN IF--
WAIT A MINUTE!
HE MIGHT BE LONG GONE BY NOW.. BUT I CAN'T SHAKE THIS FEELING THAT HE'S STILL IN THE CITY.
THE FIRST GOBLIN.. HARRY'S FATHER... USED TO HAVE A HIDEOUT TUCKED AWAY IN ONE OF THOSE LOFT SPACES AROUND HERE. SEEMS LIKE HE HAD ONE ON EVERY OTHER BLOCK--!
I KNOW I'M NOT CRAZY THIS TIME!
THAT FIGURE IN THE SHADOWS...THE GREEN COSTUME--
-- IT'S GOT TO BE HIM!
YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY FROM ME THIS TIME, HARRY! WHATEVER THE CONSE-QUENCES, I CAN'T LET YOU--
OUCH!
"OUCH"?
OH, NO--
-- IT CAN'T BE!

HIYA, SPIDEY!
HIYA! HIYA! HIYA!
YOU?!
THAT'S RIGHT! IT'S YOUR OL' PAL-- THE ONE AND ONLY--
-- FABULOUS FROG-MAN!
SOMEBODY... PLEASE... TELL ME I'M DREAMING!

NEXT: NOT A DREAM! NOT A HOAX! NOT AN IMAGINARY STORY! JUST 22 PAGES OF ABSURDITY AS FROG-MAN GETS SPIDEY INTO..."ANOTHER FINE MESS!"

(HEY-- AFTER SEVEN STRAIGHT MONTHS OF GRIM, IT'S ABOUT TIME WE HAD A LITTLE FUN!)

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAIL

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

DANNY FINGEROTH
EDITOR
ERIC FEIN
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Attention correspondents: All letters considered for publication must include your name and address, though we will withhold that information upon request.

Dear Danny,

What are the deeply hidden secrets of Peter Parker's parents? Over the last thirty years, the story of Richard and Mary Parker has only been touched on once. Am I right in thinking J.M. is steering us towards some sort of revelation about Peter Parker, and perhaps a hidden guilt over the death of Richard and Mary?

"The Child Within" is a series not only about children, but also parents and the relationship between the two. Vermin's past is still very much a mysterious one, yet Harry Osborn is a much more open book. Harry has always needed a crutch to rest on--first his father, then drugs, then his "career" as the Green Goblin, and finally Liz. Liz was always the stronger of the two, but it seems that she isn't strong enough for Harry. Harry has never really grown up. He's *still* that scared little boy. Now he's being driven over the edge once more. The threat of the Green Goblin looks set to return---with Spidey once more the target of his insanity.

Finally, I'll keep saying it as long as it's true...Sal, your art has never been better! It helps make this book the best one on the market. After only two months, SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN is at the top of my 'must read' list--a place it's not been since "The Death of Jean DeWolfe."

Rol Hirst
England

You're right about this story being about parent/child relationships, Rol. Don't miss the upcoming "Name of the Rose" story, happening right now in WEB OF SPIDER-MAN, where the Kingpin takes on his son *and* the Rose. Talk about a family crisis! And guess which well-meaning wall-crawler ends up the monkey-in-the-middle?

Dear Mr. DeMatteis,

Wow!! SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #178 practically blew me out of my reading chair!! And it was your writing that made it so spectacular. Never have I seen a writer who takes the reader right into the story like you do. I could feel the torment that Vermin was going through, torn between what he has become and what he once was. It was horrifyingly fascinating to see what Vermin's psychic poison did to Spider-Man, the normally calm and cool hero, who suddenly was turned into a homicidal lunatic. I truly believe that Spidey would have killed Vermin were it not for Dr. Kafka's interference.

From top to bottom this was a stupendously superb issue! The scenes where Harry talked with the grim ghost of his father were suitably eerie, and the final page brought my excitement to a never before reached peak! I eagerly look forward to the next issue!!

Andy Harris
102 S. Clay
Depere, WI 54115

Dear Spectacular Spider-Crew,

Re: SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #178 &179.

It is not often that a comic is *so* well written that I find it hard to tell who is the villain and who is the hero. This is the case with "The Child Within" storyline currently running. As of chapter 2, it seems to me that Vermin is no longer a terrible, merciless killer, but a man trapped inside an animal's body. Spider-Man seems to be the villain--what with him beating up Vermin when he tried to contact Dr. Kafka for help. What appears to have happened in that ish is that Vermin, after being rejected by his parents, tried to contact Dr. Kafka, who had helped him before. When he tried to find her and talk to her, Spider-Man stepped in the way and beat him up, doing more damage than good!

Josh Earwood
4002 Bemstone Road
Austin, TX 78749

Point of view *is* an amazing thing, Josh. Take the upcoming 3-parter starring the Vulture, who's dying and wants to make peace with his enemies--by killing them--starting with Aunt May! Interesting perspective, huh?!

Dear Sirs,

I haven't followed this title regularly since Peter David's departure, but when I heard that J.M. DeMatteis was taking over the writing duties, I knew that'd change.

Issue #178 was the best SPIDER-MAN story I've read in quite a while. I've found Vermin to be an interesting character since his appearances in CAPTAIN AMERICA, and it would seem that Mr. DeMatteis agrees. I look forward to learning more about this character, as Mr. DeMatteis takes us on a journey through the dark shadows of his past, and divulges 'the Bad Thing' from his childhood.

The Harry/Norman subplot also looks promising. Although we've seen this done time and again, I'm looking forward to the return of the Green Goblin. It's been a while.

Sal Buscema is also to be commended for the excellent artwork he's turning out. I've been a fan of Mr. Buscema's for almost as long as I've collected comics, and it's good to see his work once again.

Until next time...

Marson Fedrick
P.O. Box 514
Ellisville, MS 39437

Dear SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN,

While reading SSM #178, I noticed Vermin's doctor was Dr. Kafka. This led me to think of Franz Kafka, the writer of *Metamorphosis*--an early 20th century book about a man who turns into a giant bug--this led me to think of Spider-Man, who has also changed, in a way, into a large bug. But, after thinking a while I remembered the first line of *Metamorphosis*: "When Gregor Samsa woke up one morning from unsettling dreams, he found himself changed in his bed into a monstrous vermin." You can't miss the mention of the word "vermin." So, what the comic may be alluding to is that both the story of Spider-Man and the story of Vermin mirror the story of Gregor Samsa in *Metamorphosis*. Who says comics aren't intellectual?

John Nora
(Address withheld by request)

Duh...not us, John, not us.

Dear Marvel,

It ought to go without saying, but I'll say it anyway: SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #178: "The Child Within," part one has left me jubilant. The DeMatteis magic is back! And the art of Sal Buscema goes extraordinarily well with DeMatteis' storytelling. The issue is filled with pearls of artistic excellence, as was DeMatteis' last Spider-Man story, "Kraven's Last Hunt." I don't know how to express it, but I really, really liked this issue. There were so many great things in it. For instance, Harry Osborn's bout with his father's ghost. The psychological aspects of Harry and Vermin are explored in depth and with incredible realism, all circumstances considered. Both of them (and probably also Spider-Man, as the story may reveal) are having trouble with their child within. This is the work of creative artists who really know their stuff. And they are the best at what they do.

Tue Sorensen
Blytaekkerporten 2135
DK-2650 Hvidovre
Denmark, Europe

We think you expressed it very well, Tue. Thanks.

NEXT ISSUE: The side-splitting super hero adventure of the year, featuring the trio *nobody* demanded we bring back: the *White Rabbit*, the *Frog-Man* and the *Walrus*! It's by J.M. and Sal and it's gonna be a gas! Don't miss it!